

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 8-10 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3 and 5.

Further in the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected independent claims 1 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kumano and Yamagata. In response, Applicant would first like to particularly point out that in the Office Action on page 2 in Section No. 3., with the paragraph beginning "Regarding claim 1, ...", the Examiner has verbatim repeated his arguments from the Office Action mailed August 3, 2005. Applicant respectfully submits that this verbatim repeat of the Examiner's prior argument does not take into account the agreement reached in the Interview of November 8, 2005, and the Examiner's acknowledgement, that Kumano does not disclose an abutment portion in Fig. 1 above stopper 52 that is located inside the key side walls. As agreed, and as explained in detail in the Amendment filed on December 5, 2005, and as can be seen in Fig. 2 of Kumano, there is no abutment portion above stopper 52 that is inside the key side walls. The cross-sectional structure above stopper 52 shown in Fig. 2 does not engage with stopper 52. This cross-sectional structure above stopper 52 is associated with white key 20 and does not engage with stopper 52 even though the cross-sectional drawing appears to show engagement. White key 20 engages with stopper 56 by front wall 22. Black key 30 engages with stopper 52. See Kumano at col. 3, lines 57-60 and col. 4, lines 27-31. Again, in the Interview, the Examiner agreed with Applicant's representative. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's

repeated verbatim argument regarding stopper 52 disclosing Applicant's abutment portion inside the key side walls has been repeated in error.

Therefore, as further discussed in the Interview, the only remaining structure in Kumano that the Examiner is arguing discloses an abutment portion inside the side walls is the structure shown in Fig. 2 above stopper 56. However, as argued by Applicant's representative in the Interview, and as agreed by the Examiner, this abutment portion of Kumano is not formed inside of the front wall of the key. The structure 22 of Kumano cannot both disclose a front wall and an abutment portion formed inside of the front wall.

Now, in the Office Action, the Examiner argues that it would have been obvious to include the ribs of Yamagata, which the Examiner argues are formed inside the front wall of the keys, in Kumano for disclosing this feature of Applicant's claimed invention. The Examiner argues that there would be a motivation to include ribs 14, 15 formed inside of a front wall of the key top of Yamagata in Kumano "in order to reinforce the structure of the key at the portion where it abuts the stopper." (emphasis added). Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection.

First, Kumano already includes structurally reinforcing ribs. See, for example, the cross-sectional structure of key 20 shown in Figure 2, as discussed above. Therefore, there would be no motivation to include additional reinforcing ribs in Kumano. Kumano already includes reinforcing ribs.

Further, even if Yamagata's ribs 14, 15 could be included in Kumano, the modified Kumano reference still does not disclose Applicant's abutment portion

as claimed, as will be further explained below. As explained previously, Applicant's abutment portions, e.g., ribs, are not for reinforcement of the key at the portion where it abuts the stopper. Rather, Applicant's abutment portions, as explained previously and as disclosed in Applicant's specification at least at page 5, first paragraph, are used for increasing the surface area of the key for abutment with a stopper. This is why claims 1 and 6 further claim that the abutment portion has a lower end located at approximately the same height as lower ends of the side walls and that the stoppers, therefore, abut the side walls and the abutment portion. Thus, this additional claim language further defines that Applicant's abutment portions are for increasing the surface area for abutment with a stopper. Again, Yamagata's reinforcing ribs 14, 15 are not for the purpose of increasing an abutment surface area at the lower ends of the side walls of the keys. In fact, "ribs 14 and 15 reinforce the top plate 12" of the key top 11. Yamagata, col. 2, lines 34-35. (emphasis added). The reason why Yamagata's ribs reinforce the top plate of the key top is because Yamagata's keys are used for keyboards. This is a completely different use for the key than Applicant's keys, and Kumano's keys, which are used in a musical instrument. Thus, the keys of Yamagata and Kumano have totally different structures. This is why, even if the Examiner attempts to include the ribs 14, 15 of Yamagata in the structure of Kumano, the modified Kumano reference still does not disclose Applicant's abutment portion since the included ribs of Yamagata would not have a lower end located at approximately the same height as lower ends of the side walls of the key. As can be clearly seen in Yamagata, ribs 14, 15 do not have

a lower end located at approximately the same height as the lower ends of the side walls of the key top. Thus, even if Yamagata's ribs 14, 15 were included in Kumano, the ribs and the side walls of the key would not both abut against the stopper when the key is depressed, as claimed by Applicant in claims 1 and 6.

Therefore, in summary, even if Yamagata discloses a rib formed inside a front wall of a key, Applicant respectfully submits that there would be no motivation to include this reinforcing rib of Yamagata in Kumano. Kumano already includes reinforcing ribs. Additionally, even if the ribs of Yamagata could be included in Kumano, the modified Kumano reference with the ribs of Yamagata still does not disclose Applicant's claimed invention. As discussed above, the ribs of Yamagata, if combined with Kumano, still would not disclose the claimed feature of Applicant's invention where a lower end of the abutment portion is located at approximately the same height as lower ends of the side walls. Applicant's invention claims this feature because the abutment portion increases the abutment surface area. Yamagata's ribs do not disclose this feature because they are only reinforcing ribs for the top plate of the key top. There is no need in Yamagata, and there is no teaching in Yamagata, to have the lower ends of the ribs located at approximately the same height as the lower ends of the side walls because they do not have the same purpose as Applicant's claimed abutment portions.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that it is improper to attempt to modify Kumano by Yamagata. There is no motivation to include the reinforcing ribs of Yamagata in Kumano. Additionally, even if Kumano could be modified by

Yamagata, the modified reference still does not disclose Applicant's claimed invention.

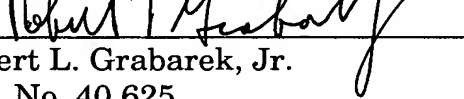
Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance with claims 1-7 being allowable, in addition to allowed claims 8-10. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

As stated above, this paper should be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any such fee or any deficiency in fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket 056272.52748US).

Respectfully submitted,

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